

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL DURING 1952!

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 20, No. 1

January 1952

Whole No. 232

RARE DIME NOVELS

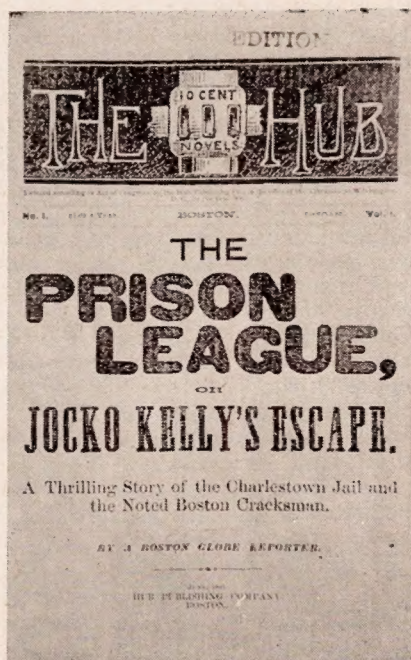
By Edward T. LeBlanc

#4

THE HUB 10 CENT NOVELS

The Hub 10 Cent Novels, unheard of until a number of them were uncovered by an ardent collector in an antique shop on Cape Cod are very rare, indeed. Mr. Ralph F. Cummings has been gracious enough to allow me the use of those in his collection to write this article. The first number was issued in June, 1891, published by the Hub Publishing Company of Boston, Massachusetts. No address was given but on the second and subsequent issues the street address of 93 Federal Street was added. In size it was slightly larger than the Beadles Pocket Library, measuring 5¾ by 8½ inches. The last number, 18, was dated November, 1892. They were issued in black and white and bore no pictures. After the first printing they were evidently re-issued for as many as three titles are listed with the same number. The price was dropped to 5 cents, the words 5 cent edition being added to the masthead, and in some cases the new price was rubber stamped across the top.

Through this library appeared a series of six stories about Jocko Kelly, a notorious Boston hoodlum who gained his "fame" by escaping from Charlestown prison. These were written by a gentleman calling himself "A Boston Globe Reporter" and many of the passages in the stories were listed directly from that paper. The series followed the facts quite closely and I would assume that the author was a reporter who covered the police beat for the Boston Globe and therefore was very familiar with Jocko Kelly's history. All attempts to verify this has failed as no one at the Globe could remember that



far back and no records exist which could give a clue to the author's real name. Proof of Kelly's existence however is ample. The Boston newspapers of the period are full of his exploits. In the Boston Globe of October 5, 1890, there is a pen picture of Jocko with a \$500 reward offered for him dead or alive, preferably dead. A check of police records was attempted in order to get Kelly's vital statistics, but to no avail, all old Boston police records were turned over to waste paper drives during the last war.

The Kelly stories open with Kelly and a group of other hoodlums meeting in an empty freight car in the Old Colony Railroad yard and plotting the robbery of a Washington Street jewelry store. The bold robbery is carried out. At 7:45 P.M., a very busy hour, Fighting Bill Grant steps to the door of the Keane Jewelry Store at 1301 Washington Street and using a wooden beam bars the door holding all persons inside the store. Kelly aided by Sly Pete Waldron, Limpy Joe Capron and Silky Jack boldly break the plate glass window and help themselves to as much "loot" as possible, taking off up one of the many alleys in this district of Boston. The whole group makes a clean getaway much to the chagrin of the Boston police.

The group, one by one, make their way to Fancy Nell's place, a sort of boarding house and sailor's tavern not far from Olneyville Square in Providence, R. I. There, the jewelry is disposed of and with their pockets well lined, Jocko Kelly and the gang are off to New York where they have a gay time. There is a show of bad blood between Kelly and Limpy Joe over the division of the spoils. Later in Boston, Limpy Joe is found by the police dying of accidental poisoning. Before dying, he confesses his part in the robbery and implicates Jocko Kelly and the rest of the gang. Kelly is arrested as he is trying to leave Boston on an outgoing train and after being tried and found guilty is sentenced to 25 years in Charlestown prison.

A league of prisoners had been formed in the prison with the aim of effecting a general break. All those leaving upon expiration of their sentence or parole were to smuggle in arms and aid as much as possible in furthering the plans of the league. Kelly who had been in Charlestown prison before had been a member of the league, and the head of this league believing Jocko had let them down in not giving his aid while he was on the outside is for doing away with Kelly, but Jocko begged off by pleading that he had not had time to work on his plans. Sly Pete Waldron visited Kelly and together they devised a plan of escape. On the night of October 3, 1890, Kelly climbed over the wall of the prison and dropped to the side of freedom. Sly Pete was waiting with clothes and together they set out for a hideout already selected, a saloon on Lowell Street. Needless to say, the Prison League was forgotten. On entering the back room of the tavern, Jocko Kelly spied a policeman and believing he had been betrayed hits the policeman over the head with a heavy

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chair. The "innocent" policeman only had been making his collections. Kelly was soon quieted down and the policeman who did not know who hit him was carried out by the proprietor.

Fighting Bill Grant had obtained a position as an office boy with a wholesale firm on Canal Street and there, had managed to get the combination of the safe. At about this time he met Sly Pete and Jocko Kelly, and together they robbed the safe of some \$10,000. In the meantime, the Boston police were doing their best to track down Kelly. Nat Spence, a crack Boston detective, was set on the track. In a South Boston dive he got a lead from a conversation of two thugs who had been present when Kelly had slugged the policeman with a chair. He followed them, but with no luck. He decided to try watching Kelly's home in East Boston.

After dividing the "swag," Kelly, Sly Pete and Fighting Bill decided the best thing to do was to get out of Boston. Since trains were being carefully watched, they decided to stowaway on a steamer. Kelly, however wanted to visit his sister before leaving and with much misgivings by his two buddies does just that. He arrived at his home during the night and went to his room intending to say goodbye to his sister early the next morning. Nat Spence, being on guard had witnessed Jocko's arrival and soon had the house surrounded with police. Spence and another policeman rushed into the house and straight to Jocko's room expecting to catch him by surprise, but the room was empty. Two policemen stationed beneath his window had not seen him, but Jocko had climbed to the flat roof of his home the moment he had sensed danger. After a hurried consultation Spence and the policeman decided to have a look on the roof and left the room to ascend via a skylight in the hall. Kelly hearing everything that went on in his room threw some pebbles to distract the two policemen below and was back in his room before they were back at their station. He borrowed his brother's coat and walked out the front door mumbling something to the policeman there about the disgrace to the family of having such a brother as Jocko. Once around the corner of the block he took to his heels. Once again the Boston police had been made fools of by Jocko Kelly. (This episode is noted as true by the author).

Later in the day Jocko was safely aboard a steamer bound for England having traded his brother's coat for a porter's garb and stealing aboard with no one the wiser. However the porter during routine questioning mentioned that he had traded coats with someone answering Kelly's description. Immediately the English police were notified via telegraph and they were waiting at the dock in Liverpool for Kelly, but again he was successful in escaping. He reached the slum district of Liverpool where he set himself up house-keeping with a redhead he met in one of the pubs. In so doing he beat up a former lover making him a deadly enemy who after learning his conqueror's identity tipped off the police. After once again escaping from a police trap Jocko decides Liverpool is too hot for him and leaves for London. There he is caught up with by Nat Spence and finally pays the penalty.

These Jocko Kelly stories were republished in the Yankee 5¢ Library in 1894, as were some of the other stories. Most of the Coolidge stories appeared in the New York 10¢ Library which was published by the Kathadin Publishing Co. in 1896. The Coolidge stories were again reprinted in the Eureka Detective Series published by Ogilvie.

LIST OF TITLES

1. The Prison League; or, Jocko Kelly's Escape. A Thrilling Story of the Charlestown Jail and the Noted Boston Cracksman, by A Boston Globe Reporter. #2 Yankee 5¢ Library.
- *1. Jocko Kelly's Escape. A Story of Boston (inside title page same as above)
2. The Mystery of the Montauk Mills. A Story of New England Factory Life, by Erwin L. Coolidge. #5 NY 10¢ Liby. #20 Eureka Det. Ser.

3. The Cry of Defiance; or, Jocko Kelly and the Detectives, by A Boston Globe Reporter. #3 Yankee 5¢ Library.
 - *3. Jocko Kelly and the Detectives. A Companion Story to the Prison League (inside title page same as above)
 4. The Serpent Sword; or, A Boston Boy in India, by Erwin L. Coolige.
 - *4. The Southern Star; or, The Belle of the Island City. A Romance of Galveston, by Win C. Livingstone. #4 Yankee 5¢ Liby. #6 NY 10¢ Liby.
 5. Jocko Kelly at Sea; or, The Artful Dodger's Clever Scheme, by A Boston Globe Reporter. #5 Yankee 5¢ Liby.
 6. Always a Hero; or, Gus Boyde at School and College, by Win C. Livingstone. #13 NY 10¢ Liby.
 - *6. Almy. A Story of Crime, by A Boston Globe Reporter.
 7. Jocko Kelly in England; or, The Water Front Riots. The History of the Boston Cracksmen's Wonderful Adventures in the Great Strike, by A Boston Globe Reporter. #6 Yankee 5¢ Liby.
 8. The Fortunes of a Factory Girl. A Tale of the Manchester Mills, by Erwin L. Coolige. #2 NY 5¢ Liby.
 9. Jocko Kelly in London; or, The Detective from Boston. Being the Fifth of a Series of True Stories of the Wonderful Adventures of Boston's Noted Cracksmen. By A Boston Globe Reporter. #7 Yankee 5¢ Liby.
 10. Firelight, the Mountain Spectre; or, Three Boston Boys in the Wild West, by Erwin L. Coolige. #9 Yankee 5¢ Liby.
 11. Jocko Kelly Trapped; or, What Killed Limpy Joe, by A Boston Globe Reporter. #8 Yankee 5¢ Liby.
 12. The Secret of the Silver Anchor; or, A Sweet Girl's Fortune, A Tale of Land and Sea, by Erwin L. Coolige.
 13. Jocko Kelly's Pal; or, Sly Pete's Life History. The Story of a Heartless Desertion, by A Boston Globe Reporter.
 14. The Cup of Life. A Weird Tale, by Erwin L. Coolige.
 - *14. The Southern Star; or, The Belle of the Island City. A Romance of Galveston, by Erwin L. Coolige.
 - *14. The Serpent Sword; or, A Boston Boy in India, by Win C. Livingston.
 15. Sawtell's Head; or, A Boston Detective's Pledge of Honor. A Romance of New England's Greatest Tragedy, by A Boston Globe Reporter.
 16. Kathie, the Overseer's Daughter; or, Love and Life at the Loom, by George W. Goode, #9 NY 10¢ Liby.
 17. Almy: A Story of Crime, by A Boston Globe Reporter.
 18. Dan Hayes' Greatest Case. A Wonderful and Thrilling Detective Story, by George W. Goode.
- *Re-issue in 5¢ edition.

19TH CENTURY PEEP-SHOW

By Fred T. Singleton

IV

It will be a long time before the acclaim for Albert Johannsen's House of Beadle and Adams dies away. No greater proof of its excellence is needed than the fact that it seems to make its greatest appeal to senior Beadle fans. For years Johannsen pestered librarians, newspaper editors, and novel collectors from Maine to California for accurate data, and the result is a veritable encyclopedia of live facts about the romance-covered publishing house of Beadle and Adams, where the trail to wild western adventure began for thousands of men-boys in the late 1870's and early 1880's. This writer turned at once to the biography of Orville Victor, talented editor for many years of the Beadle publications, and friend to fiction writers big and little. Many times during the past twenty years we wondered what became of him in the late

1890's as twilight descended on the deserted old publishing house. But we found no happy ending. John H. Whitson, a Beadle author from 1885, met Victor for the first time at the end of the century. The editor was old and tired, working at writing in a little office on Beadle-haunted William Street. "Spoke with feeling of his wife long dead." Victor himself died March 14, 1900, at the age of 83. Gilbert Patten said that Victor was "one of the kindest and most helpful editors I've ever known." And as Whitson ended his letter to Ralph Adimare we end this paragraph: "A great editor. Peace to his ashes."

Another comparatively new book (1950) we have been browsing through is the London-published *Queens of the Circulating Libraries*. Selections from the novels of nine of the most successful of the Victorian lady-novelists of the 1850-1890 period are given, and each is introduced in a few pages preceding the selections by Alan Walbank, who also did the selecting. Famous names, in the order of their rise to fame, are Charlotte M. Yonge, Mrs. Henry Wood, Mrs. Oliphant, Miss M. E. Braddon, "Ouida," Rhoda Broughton, "The Duchess," Mrs. Humphrey Ward, and Marie Corelli. Yankee novel readers of the 1850's and 1880's made the acquaintance of these ladies in the Seaside Library, George Munro's standout contribution to good cheap reading in the two decades before international copyright (1891). In going through great stacks of the Seaside Library over a period of some twenty years I found many titles of all of the authors honored by selections in the book except Mrs. Humphrey Ward and Marie Corelli. These two writers flashed on the novel-reading world in the late 1880's and republication in cheap editions was somewhat curtailed in our country. Mrs. Ward's first and most successful book was *Robert Elsmere* (1888), and Marie Corelli came through with her sensational *Romance of Two Worlds* in 1886.

No reader or collector of popular print of the Victorian era knew better than the late John Medcraft, of Ilford, England, that George W. M. Reynolds, author of *Mysteries of London*, *Mysteries of the Court of London*, and anywhere from thirty to sixty other penny romances of the 1840-1860 period, was no small fry among the old-time penny fictionists. Medcraft had a continuous not always to be met demand for the romantic and most always thrilling Reynolds stories, all of them tremendously popular in mid-Victorian England. We had to wait nearly a year for him to supply us with a copy of *Faust*, one of the earliest (1847). In his own time Reynolds was attacked by political as well as literary highbrows. To-day unprejudiced bibliographers describe his romances as "literature of the servants' quarters, the seamstresses' workroom, and the mechanics' shop, and if they did no great good they did no great harm, and unquestionably relieved a world which was somewhat drab at its best." The present writer puts his Reynolds novels in a higher class. But more about this later.

TIP TOP WEEKLY — Bought, Sold and Exchanged

A large stock on hand, many in the very early issues. Take this opportunity to increase your files of the Merriwell stories. Prices reasonable. All correspondence promptly answered.

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NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Here's Wishing you all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Ernest Beique sent in clipping: Nevada Indian, dies at 112. (Worcester, Mass., Evening Gazette) Dec. 27th, 1951. Billie Mose, an Indian who said he could remember when Salt Lake City's population of 10 persons lived in a single log cabin, died Tuesday night. Mose is believed to be Nevada's oldest Indian.

Thanks to the Brotherhood Members and friends that have sent me cards of good cheer, all around.

Bill Langell says he heard a funny story of a farm boy who lived out his way, in the dime novel days. He liked them with lots of shootin', Buffalo Bill and Jesse James. He would take a novel and his pistol down to the creek that ran through the farm, sit down and read. When he came to some shootin', Crack! Crack! Bang! Bang! he would shoot a corresponding number of shots into the creek, then read until he came to more shooting, for every shot fired in the novel he blazed away.

G. Fred Orphal and others sent a clipping from N. Y. Times, Nov. 15, 1951, that we've lost another member fellers, #184, T. Henry Foster, c/o John Morrell & Co., Ottumwa, Iowa, died Nov. 14th, 1951, of a heart ailment. He was an outstanding figure in the meat packing companies of John Morrell & Co., and one of the oldest in the firm. He was 76. Some few years ago, he gave his collection of rare old dime novels of Iowa Americana to the State Historical Society of Iowa. They published in their little magazine The Palimpsest, June 1949, on Iowa dime novels, "Collecting Dime Novels," by T. Henry Foster. "The Beadles and their Novels," by Frank Luther Mott. "Pioneer Iowa in Beadle Fiction," by Vera I. Mott. This booklet of about 40 pages is well printed and illustrated. God bless him always.

Roy E. Morris and George Flaum got together for a fine visit not long ago. George Sahr and wife were al-

so down to visit Roy too.

John H. Foster says he sure enjoys reading the Roundup, says he never even knew such a paper existed up until a few years ago.

Robert L. Bickford Sr., Bickford, Vt., want N. Y. Detective Library No. 44.

Joe Piliponis is a man that's always kicking because things don't go right with him, always finding fault about something, sees everybody else's name in print but never his own, so we'll please him this time, Happy New Year Joe.

Chet L. Surital (H. H. Bro. Member #197) had a very fine writeup in Arizona Highways Mag. for Nov. 1951, on Automobile Lillian, the Daring Girl Bandit of Arizona. Well illustrated and all. It's a very fine article.

Just think, the Roundup is starting on its 22nd year now, it started in January 1931.

George Sahr says that Ed Le Blanc captured Merriwell Series #125 for him, so now his set of 245 numbers is complete.

Stanley A. Pachon says when Jesse James or Frank Dalton died Aug. 15, 1951, and up to the last minute did not change his claim. His relatives had asked to have the name of Jesse James on his death certificate as his real name.

Evy Trostl plummets in final act on the high wire, when she dropped to death during the afternoon performance at the Shrine Circus before 7500 persons. Her father, Arturo—"The Great Arturo" of Ringling Brothers fame, was on the high platform when his daughter lost her footing. She died a half hour later at a nearby Maryland hospital. She was to re-enter school at Tampa that weekend.

Frisco Bert Couch only needs Old Sleuths Own #1 to 15, 18 19 20 22 26 27 129 130 132 134 135 136 138 140 141 143 144 to complete his set. He has lots of Old Sleuths Own, etc.

When novels are dirty with dust or coal dust, etc., get a basin of luke warm water, sprinkle with Ivory Flakes, soak rag, then wring out, and

wash novels, over the picture, etc., not too hard, and then run a dry rag or cloth over them to dry them. You will see a big difference.

Harry A. Weill has sent me several clippings on J. Frank Dalton who claimed he was Jesse James. Well, I suppose the old guy felt good to be called and known as the famous outlaw, but where he is now, all those things are gone with him. Some think he was Jesse James while others think he was the biggest liar ever lived—who's right and who's wrong?

Earl D. Newitt, H. H. Bro. Member #96 says that the "Country Lawyer" by Bellamy Partridge is a fine article. Earl says he knew Mr. Partridge and was well acquainted with him, when Earl lived in Phelps, N. Y. back in 1910. Earl is a great reader of Pluck & Luck and Wild West.

Horatio Alger, Jr., wrote under the pen names of Arthur Lee Putnam and Arthur Hamilton.

Arvid Dahlstedt says the first "Saint" story was published in The Thriller, 2d, published over in England. He also says there's a new magazine on the market, called "High Fidelity." Vol 1 No. 1 is just out.

Esquire Mag. for Feb. 1950 has a fine 2 page article with 4 large pic-

tures of Wild West #693 and #670, Work and Win #364 and Fame and Fortune #327. It is called "Grandfather Liked them Gory," by Raymond L. Andrews. Write if you can't get a copy.

H. W. Alsford says that a fine story came out in Youth's Companion was known as the present day detective story, written by Earle Stanley Gardner. His principal character the detective-lawyer he calls Perry Mason. How Come. Alsford wonders if this is just a coincidence, or has it a connection with the old Perry Mason Co.

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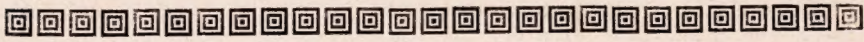
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163. Harold C. Farmer, 117 E. Elm St., Lansing 10, Mich.
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186. John R. Smith, 63 Wilson Ave., Lynbrook, L. I., N. Y.
191. Stephen A. Osborn, 886 Fairmount Ave., St. Paul 5, Minn.
211. Walter A. Coslet, P. O. Box Six, Helena, Mont. (New Member)



FOR SALE

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The Novel Hunters Year Books #1 to 6. Complete set, nice. Price \$1.00. Full of novel articles and what not.

Over 100 E. Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books, all in good condition for \$7.50 or 10¢ each.

The Bush Boys, by Capt. Mayne Reade, quite good, for 50¢.

Dell 10¢ Books #1-2-7-31 new, came out in 1951. Price 10¢ each.

Fries Souvenir Number Fries Frank Reade Series #1-2-3-4-5-6, the set for \$1.00 or 20¢ each.

Fries Blood and Thunder Library #1 to 3, the set, all 3 for 25¢ or 10¢ each.

Fries An Old Timer #1, only one published, 15¢ scarce.

Cummings Pioneers and Scouts of the Old West #1, only one pub. 15¢.

Cummings The Novel World #1 to 6. Complete set, 50¢ or 10¢ each.

The set of 2 Vols. of Johannsens, The House of Beadle & Adams, in fine condition, full of colored pictures and some black and whites of novels and story papers, etc., published by Beadle and Adams, 1856 to 1897. These two bound volumes are now out of print, and are getting scarcer all the time. No novel collector should be without them. Price for both, \$25.00.

The Adventures of a Post Captain and John Newcome in the Navy, both stories go together. Both have beautifully colored pictures in them, and are real scarce. Price \$6.00 for both. These seem to be in poetry form, dated 1904.

All sent postpaid by

Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

